



CATHEY MIDDLE SCHOOL  
LIBRARY REDESIGN  
JANUARY 2013 - PRESENT

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LIBRARIAN



# Part One: The Bookstore Concept

- In early 2013, the librarian from a fellow middle school called and said she was thinking of changing up her library. A friend in a neighboring district had "genrefied" her school library and the new layout was working well. We went to tour two campuses - a middle school and a high school - and to speak with the staff about the ongoing work that was occurring. Each campus was unique in the way it organized its genres because each set of students had different preferences, but all were implementing the new "bookstore concept" that seemed so innovative.
- Two McAllen librarians decided to give it a try in our own libraries. Yikes!



# The Way We Were



- The library in which I had come to work had one fiction section consisting of five stacked cases (they used to be ten lower cases but were stacked when the computer area was installed). The fiction section was General and the books were alphabetized A-Z by author's last name.



# Selecting the genres

- Every school is different, and every group of kids is different. What my colleague chose for her genres might not necessarily work for my students, and vice versa. I pulled reports of the top books checked out on my campus over the past three years and the current 2012-2013 school year and found patterns which I grouped into four sections with a smaller General section:

1. *Girls Read*

2. *Fantasy / Supernatural*

3. *General Fiction*

4. *Science Fiction / Mystery / Thriller*

5. *Guys Read*



- I explained the project to my principal and he offered his support, which was so crucial for something this huge. Next, I created a work order in February 2013. I figured once the work order gained approval beyond the campus, it would happen within a month.
- Six months later...no word. Feelings of dismay set in. Maybe the project would ultimately not be approved.
- The first week of classes in late August, I received word that workmen would be coming within days to unstack the two outer cases to make two short cases on the outer left and two short cases on the outer right, with three tall cases remaining in the middle (like a parabola). Just like that, the project would finally begin!



# ...and so it begins. Ruh-roh.

- Since I had no idea when they were going to come after the February work order, I didn't want to start moving thousands of books into genres just to sit on a table or the floor for who knows how long.
- As the workmen were unstacking and adjusting the cases, my clerk, the student library aides, parent volunteers, and I were separating the General Fiction section into what would be five smaller sections. Yikes.





One step at a time.





# A glimmer of light

- Within a week, we had organized enough of the books to finish one section: Girls Read. I brought floral displays from my own house, dug around my parents' garage, found a funky, pink, swirly bolt of felt at a fabric store, and scrounged for any sales I could find for other decor.







Pretty soon, we had the two small cases on the left completed. Fantasy/Supernatural was so big that it extended onto both sides of the first tall case! No big deal - a librarian can roll with it.





The left side was done. The Fantasy/Supernatural section has purple and black decor, a bit more gothic than the pinks and oranges of the Girls Read section.

The right side was arranged, but needed to be decorated. Back to the fabric store and Mom and Dad's garage.







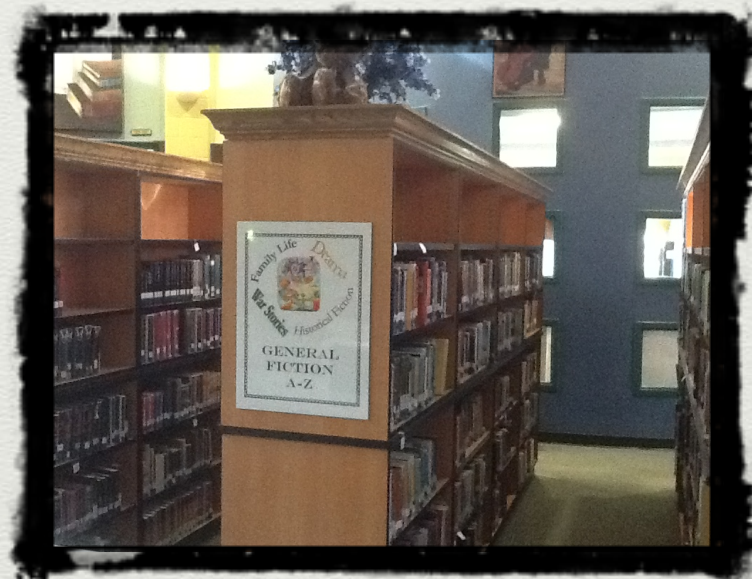
For the Sci-Fi/Mystery/Thriller, I wanted it to look like a science lab, and luckily Hobby Lobby had all their classic glass containers on sale that week. I chose shades of blue for this section.

It's good to have two brothers who never threw away their old sports equipment. I took a deflated football and basketball from their nests of cobwebs, cleaned them off, and put them in Guys Read with boat nets and other sports/recreation decor.





# At last, the cases are done!







The addition of 18"x24" color posters of each section (matching the spine labels we created for the genres) gave it a professional touch and makes it easier for the kids to find the section where they want to browse.



# Lounging around





# So is the file closed?

- The project isn't done yet. We have to finish putting spine labels (matching the section posters) on every book in each subsection.
- Then, we have to create new categories in the online catalog and scan each book to update the MARC records for the Fiction area. This is going to be a daunting task but it will allow us to track the circulation patterns better so we can report the results in an effective way.
- This is an ongoing project. It won't really end. Five years from now, student preferences may be heavily towards adventure rather than fantasy and the physical layout of the Fiction section may change. The subgenres, being pretty general, will most likely stay pretty similar.

*The library is alive and ongoing, not dead and static.*